



The Resilient Pulse: The Evolution of Health and Wellness Brands in Nigeria

Top 6 Health and
Wellness Trends Driving
Business Growth

Meet Three Female CEOs
Driving Innovation and
Growth in Nigeria's
Healthcare Sector

How Counterfeiting,
Unverified Claims,
and AI-Generated Scams
Are Eroding
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Editor's Note

Prioritising Brand, Workers and Corporate Well-Being

In 2026, the global landscape for businesses is poised for significant transformation, driven by economic shifts, technological advancements, and evolving consumer expectations. For Nigerian, African, and international companies alike, prioritising brand integrity, worker well-being, and corporate health is not merely a moral choice but a strategic imperative.

Nigeria's economy is projected to grow at a steady pace, with forecasts predicting a GDP expansion of around 3.2 per cent in 2026. This growth presents both opportunities and challenges. Companies that focus on fostering a healthy, engaged workforce will be better positioned to seize emerging market opportunities. When employees are well-supported, they are more productive, innovative, and committed to delivering much more. Moreover, healthy workers reduce absenteeism and healthcare costs, contributing positively to the bottom line.

Across Africa, the trend is clear: nations are investing heavily in infrastructure, digital connectivity, and human capital development. These investments will accelerate economic integration across the continent, creating a fertile environment for brands that prioritise health and well-being.

Similarly, consumers are increasingly conscious of brands that demonstrate social responsibility and genuinely care for their communities and employees. Companies that embed well-being into their organisational culture will not only

attract top talent but also build loyal customer bases.

Globally, the emphasis on corporate well-being is intensifying, especially in a post-pandemic world where health has become central to corporate reputation. The most successful brands in 2026 will be those that maintain continuous engagement with consumers, ensuring that their offerings are aligned with health-conscious lifestyles. This means investing in product integrity, transparent communication, and adaptive marketing strategies that highlight a commitment to health and well-being.

From an economic perspective, 2026 presents a unique window of opportunity. As markets recover and expand, businesses that prioritise their brand health and workforce well-being will be better prepared to capitalise on growth. Ensuring that employees are healthy and motivated translates into higher productivity and innovation, which are crucial for long-term sustainability. Additionally, brands that actively engage consumers in health-focused initiatives will foster loyalty and drive competitive differentiation in crowded markets.

In essence, health is wealth for individuals, organisations, and economies alike. Companies that recognise this truth will not only bolster their brand reputation but also build resilient, agile organisations capable of thriving amidst uncertainty. As we look ahead to 2026, the message is clear: prioritise your brand, invest in your



workers' well-being, and cultivate a corporate culture that champions health. Because in doing so, you secure a prosperous future for all.

In line with this reality, this edition shines a spotlight on Health and Wellness Brands, as well as businesses in other sectors that are making impactful contributions to Nigeria's growing health industry and the overall well-being of its people.

Packed with insightful industry reports and expert analyses, this edition offers readers a wealth of knowledge. Among the highlights is the feature on Top 6 Health and Wellness Trends Driving Business Growth, a must-read for anyone eager to understand the forces shaping the market.

We also delve into a pressing challenge — the impact of counterfeiting on our economy and businesses, with case studies on some of the most affected brands. This segment underscores the importance of brand integrity and consumer trust in today's competitive landscape.

Beyond these compelling stories, the edition is rich with diverse content designed to inform, inspire, and entertain. From Women Behind Brands and Sports Marketing to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Spotlight Features, Opinions, and Lifestyle pieces — every page promises engaging insights worth your time.

So, sit back, relax, and immerse yourself in this specially curated edition. It's crafted with you in mind.

Azeez Disu
Editor-in-Chief

Brand|Times

THE TEAM

Editor-in-Chief
Azeez Disu

Content Specialists
Morohunmubo Alabi
Olufemi Somotun (UK)
Prosper Mene
Olaide Arowolo

Creative Director
Akintunde Akinsanmi

Published by
7SKIES
COMMUNICATIONS

Contact US Brand Times

www.brandtimes.com.ng
brandtimesmail@gmail.com
info@brandtimes.com.ng
08091998036, 08030765692

7SKIES COMMUNICATIONS
(Publishers of Brand Times Magazine)

7, Asiata Solarin Crescent, Off Kudirat
Abiola Way, Oregun, Lagos Nigeria

How Counterfeiting, Unverified Claims, and AI-Generated Scams Are Eroding Health Marketing



By Azeez Disu

Nigeria's marketplace has become a dangerous "fertile ground" for a counterfeit epidemic that threatens both the lives of its citizens and the integrity of its economic systems. Recent data from the **Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON)** paints a grim picture: **counterfeit goods now account for an estimated 40 per cent of products in the Nigerian market**, resulting in annual economic losses exceeding **\$20 billion**. While the financial damage is staggering, the human cost is a deepening public health emergency.

The Lethal Allure of Unverified Claims

The rise of digital media has birthed a new frontier for deception. The **Advertising Regulatory Council of Nigeria (ARCON)** has sounded a stern warning against the "rising tide of misleading advertising". Deceptive practices now leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) to create deepfakes of influential figures—including President Bola

Tinubu, Pastor Enoch Adeboye, and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka—to promote fraudulent "cures" for chronic conditions like hypertension, diabetes, and prostatitis.

Dr Olalekan Fadolapo, Director-General of ARCON, emphasises that these schemes "prey on public trust and leave consumers vulnerable to significant financial and emotional harm". The danger is not merely financial; the promotion of unverified health products by influencers and "skit makers" has led to severe medical challenges for many citizens.

A Health Marketing Crisis

In the realm of health marketing, trust is the primary currency. However, this currency is being rapidly devalued. A survey of 115 Nigerians revealed a "deep and pervasive distrust," with **93 respondents admitting they do not trust medicines sold in open markets**. This lack of confidence forces a staggering **110 out of 115 respondents to prefer foreign-manufactured drugs**, believing they are better regulated.

For legitimate brands, the impact is devastating. Multinational and local companies alike report massive revenue losses as counterfeits, often sold at lower prices, make competition nearly impossible.

"Recent data from the Standards Organisation of Nigeria (SON) paints a grim picture: counterfeit goods now account for an estimated 40 per cent of products in the Nigerian market, resulting in annual economic losses exceeding \$20 billion."

INDUSTRY TIDBITS

Legitimate pharmaceutical companies see their market share diluted and their brand reputations damaged by ineffective or toxic versions of their products.

Regulatory Agencies on the Frontline

The war against this menace is being fought on multiple fronts by Nigeria's key regulators:

- **NAFDAC: The National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control** reports that approximately **17 per cent of pharmaceutical products in circulation are counterfeit**. In a decisive move, NAFDAC recently shut down the Cemetery Market in Aba, a hub for "Africa's largest counterfeit wine and beverage cartel," and destroyed fake products valued at **N15 billion** in Oyo State. Director-General Prof. Mojisola Adeyeye warns that "criminal elements" use harmful chemicals and contaminated water to mimic popular brands like Hennessy, Coca-Cola, and Peak Milk.

- **SON:** Beyond its data on market saturation, SON has confiscated over **N20 billion worth of fake products** in sectors ranging from electrical cables to engine oil. Dr Ifeanyi Okeke, Director General of SON, notes that these products are "life-threatening and injurious," contributing to building collapses and fatal road accidents.



- **FCCPC: The Federal Competition and Consumer Protection Commission** focuses on deceptive market conduct. It recently uncovered substandard sugar lacking mandatory Vitamin A fortification—a deficiency that can cause blindness. Executive Vice Chairman Tunji Bello highlighted recent raids on shops selling local rice re-bagged as expensive foreign brands, calling such practices "exploitative" and "illegal".

- **ARCON:** ARCON is aggressively monitoring social media platforms to ensure all advertisements are vetted. Dr Fadolapo warns that the "era of lawless advertising is over," and the agency is now prosecuting those

who expose unapproved advertisements.

The View from the Streets

Nigerians are increasingly vocal about their frustration. An X user, @Lord_Of_Warri, captured the national mood, stating, **"The death penalty should be handed to anyone who manufactures or sells fake consumable products. These people have killed more people than many wars"**. Others lament the daily struggle of verifying basic goods, with one citizen noting, "If you want to buy baby formula today, you have to spend more than 30 minutes reading everything. This is not life".

Experts like public health researcher Ihechilurum Ogo do observe that Nigerians are "navigating a pharmaceutical environment filled with fear, doubt, and suspicion". To restore the heartbeat of the economy, Dr Emeka Offor argues for "comprehensive and coordinated" judicial reforms and the adoption of technology like QR codes and blockchain to allow consumers to verify authenticity in real-time.

Until enforcement matches the severity of the crime, the "poisoned pills" and fake promises on Nigerian shelves remain a silent, deadly threat to the nation's health and its marketing future.



Walk for Her: Advertising and Marketing Industry Unite to Fight Breast Cancer



In Nigeria, breast cancer remains a formidable health challenge, with recent statistics painting a sobering picture. According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Nigeria recorded 32,278 new cases in 2022, making it one of the most affected countries in Africa. Tragically, over 16,000 women succumbed to the disease in the same year, underscoring the urgent need for increased awareness, early detection, and accessible treatment. The World Health Organization (WHO) highlights that breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide, with incidence rates rising rapidly in low- and middle-income countries like Nigeria.

In an inspiring display of solidarity and proactive health advocacy, Nigeria's marketing communication industry has come together to champion the fight against breast cancer. Women in Advertising (WIA), an initiative under the umbrella of the Association of Advertising Agencies of Nigeria (AAAN), recently organised the "Walk for Her" breast cancer

awareness walk in Lagos. This event, held in observance of World Cancer Day, exemplifies how industry leaders are leveraging creativity and communication to promote life-saving messages.

The walk, which brought together professionals from various sectoral groups—including the Experiential Marketers Association of Nigeria (EXMAN), the Media Independents Practitioners Association of Nigeria (MIPAN), the Outdoor Advertising Association of Nigeria (OAAN), and the National Institute of Marketing Nigeria (NIMN)—was more than a symbolic gesture. Over three hours, participants traversed key Lagos areas such as Ikeja GRA, Opebi, Oregun, and Agidingbi, culminating at the AAAN Secretariat in Alausa. The route served as a moving reminder that the fight against breast cancer must be ongoing, active, and inclusive.

The event was packed with tangible benefits. Participants received free breast cancer screenings, while expert-led discussions focused on early

INDUSTRY TIDBITS

detection and care. Interactive sessions on preventive practices provided community members with vital information, reinforcing that awareness and early intervention save lives. Oluwaseyi Layade, Chairperson of WIA, emphasised the personal and purpose-driven nature of the campaign. She noted that breast cancer impacts many women and stressed the importance of normalising conversations around the disease to foster early detection and timely treatment.

Industry leaders expressed their commitment to sustaining the momentum. Lanre Adisa, President of AAAN and Chair of the Heads of Advertising Sectoral Groups, praised the initiative and called for the establishment of a long-term strategy to embed health advocacy within industry

activities. Leaders like Tolulope Medebem of EXMAN, Adeola Odesanya of WOHAN and OAAN, Brenda Nwagwu of MIPAN, and others pledged to partner with NGOs, health organisations, and community stakeholders to expand outreach efforts.

The “Walk for Her” initiative signifies more than a one-day event; it marks the beginning of a sustained movement. Future activities will include webinars, survivor storytelling sessions, digital outreach campaigns, and collaborations with NGOs. The overarching goal is to keep the conversation alive and ensure that awareness translates into action.

As Lagos residents witnessed a sea of pink banners and passionate advocates marching through the city, one message was

clear: the Nigerian IMC industry is committed not only to building brands but also to building a healthier future for all women. By converging their talents and resources, these industry champions hope to create a lasting impact in the fight against breast cancer, empowering women to take control of their health and lives.



Sweet Poison: The Bitter Health and Economic Toll of Sugary Drinks

By Azeez Disu

The Hidden Cost of a Sweet Habit

Nigeria currently holds a sobering global position as the fourth-largest consumer of sugar-sweetened beverages (SSBs), with annual sales reaching a staggering 38.6 million litres. While these "soft drinks" are a staple at social gatherings, the consequence of this consumption is a looming public health crisis that threatens to overwhelm the nation's healthcare system and drain its economy. Experts are now sounding the alarm, calling for urgent policy interventions to curb a "looming health epidemic".

The Health Crisis in a Bottle

The health implications of excessive SSB consumption are profound and diverse. Regularly consuming these drinks is directly linked to an increased risk of obesity, type 2 diabetes, dental cavities, stroke, and various cancers. In Nigeria, the prevalence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) is rising at an alarming rate. For instance, hypertension cases among Nigerians aged 20 and older skyrocketed from 4.3 million in 1995 to 27.5 million by 2020. Similarly, type 2 diabetes cases rose from 874,000 in 1990 to approximately 4.7 million in 2015. Current data suggests that approximately 30,000 Nigerians die annually from diabetes-related complications, with over 11.4 million people currently living with the disease. Akinbode Oluwafemi, Executive Director of CAPPA, notes that "Nigeria's status as the fourth-largest consumer of soft drinks globally is a concern and is a looming health epidemic if not addressed promptly. The adverse



effects of these preventable diseases on productivity, revenue loss, and human lives underscore the urgency for effective policy solutions".

A Staggering Economic Burden

The financial toll of these illnesses extends far beyond the individual. In 2019, the economic impact of overweight and obesity in Nigeria was estimated at US\$2.37 billion, equivalent to 0.5% of the national GDP. By 2023, the direct medical costs associated with managing NCDs reached ₦493,334 million.

However, the burden is not merely medical. Indirect costs, which include lost productivity due to absenteeism and premature death, amounted to ₦78,816 million. Furthermore, family members often bear the weight of "informal care," a cost estimated at ₦57,921 million annually.

For the average Nigerian, these costs are often catastrophic. Nigeria's Universal Health Coverage stands at a mere 5%, leading to exceptionally high out-of-pocket (OOP) health expenditures that consistently exceed 70%. Public Health Expert Francis Fagbule highlights this struggle, stating: "The median out-of-pocket cost of NCDs was ₦10,193 – ₦10,750 monthly" and adding that "about 30% of

households with NCDs experienced catastrophic health expenditures in 2018".

Targeting the Next Generation

Perhaps most concerning is how the SSB industry recruits young consumers. Marketing strategies often use deceptive nutrition claims to target children and adolescents. A study of school-going adolescents in Ibadan revealed that a significant portion consumes soft drinks or energy drinks daily. Research indicates that children who consume excess SSBs are more likely to exhibit symptoms of addiction, such as cravings and anxiety, setting them up for a lifetime of chronic health struggles.

The Case for a "Win-Win-Win" Tax

The consensus among health and economic experts is that the current SSB tax of ₦10 per litre is insufficient. To trigger real behavioural change, the World Health Organization recommends a tax that results in at least a 20% increase in the final retail price.

Simulations suggest that implementing a higher excise tax, such as ₦130 per litre for carbonated drinks, could reduce per capita consumption by up to 21%. This move is projected to generate approximately ₦729 billion in annual revenue, which could be earmarked for strengthening the healthcare system.

Fidelis Obaniyi, a Research Associate at CSEA, argues: "The economic impacts of unhealthy food are profound, including direct healthcare costs and broader societal implications. An SSB tax is a viable policy intervention that can improve public health, reduce healthcare costs, and generate revenue for further health initiatives. While the tax of ₦10 per litre on SSB in Nigeria is a good beginning, the tax rate must be improved to have a significant fiscal and health impact".

Ultimately, an effective SSB tax serves as a "win-win-win" strategy: protecting public health, generating vital government revenue, and promoting health equity across Nigeria.

INSIGHT

Top 6 Health and Wellness Trends Driving Business Growth



In recent years, the global health and wellness industry has experienced exponential growth, driven by a rising awareness of holistic well-being, technological advancements, and shifting consumer preferences. This burgeoning sector presents a wealth of opportunities for entrepreneurs and established businesses alike, particularly across Africa and Nigeria, where demographic shifts and increasing disposable incomes are catalysing market expansion.

According to a report by the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), the worldwide wellness economy was valued at approximately US\$4.5 trillion in 2018, with projections suggesting it could reach US\$6 trillion by 2025. Africa, though still emerging, is recognised as one of the fastest-growing markets within this sector, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of around 7-8%, driven by urbanisation, rising health awareness, and a growing middle class. Nigeria, as Africa's largest economy, is poised to become a significant player, with its health and wellness market expected to expand rapidly in the coming decade.

Below are the most prominent trends shaping this dynamic industry, each offering unique

business opportunities grounded in current data and future projections.

1. Personalised Nutritional Health

Consumers are increasingly seeking tailored health solutions, with personalised nutrition emerging as a significant growth area. This includes DNA-based diets, meal delivery services catering to specific dietary needs, and customised supplements. The global personalised nutrition market was valued at approximately US\$8.2 billion in 2019 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 9.2% through 2027 (Fortune Business Insights).

In Nigeria and across Africa, rising awareness of lifestyle-related health issues such as diabetes and hypertension is driving demand for customised nutritional products. Local startups are now offering DNA testing combined with personalised diet plans, while meal delivery services specialising in gluten-free, keto, or plant-based diets are gaining popularity among urban professionals.

2. Mental Health and Emotional Well-Being

Mental health remains a critical concern worldwide, with the World Health Organization (WHO) estimating that one in eight people

globally lives with a mental disorder. In Africa, mental health issues are often underreported, yet the need for accessible solutions is undeniable. The mental health market is projected to be worth over US\$2 billion globally by 2023, with a CAGR of approximately 4% (Market Research Future).

In Nigeria, startups are developing mental wellness platforms offering virtual therapy, mindfulness coaching, and stress management programmes. The increasing societal acceptance of mental health conversations and the proliferation of smartphone technology are enabling broader access to these services. Additionally, practices such as sound healing and meditation have gained traction as complementary approaches to mental well-being.

3. Technology-Driven Fitness Solutions

Technology has revolutionised fitness and health monitoring, with wearables, fitness trackers, and virtual platforms becoming household staples. The global wearables market was valued at US\$16.2 billion in 2020 and is expected to grow at a CAGR of 15.9% through 2028 (Grand View Research).

In Nigeria, the penetration of affordable smartphones and internet connectivity is fostering a surge in virtual fitness classes, app-based workout routines, and wearable health devices. Local entrepreneurs are developing affordable fitness trackers tailored for African consumers, integrating local languages and culturally relevant content to enhance user engagement.

4. Wellness Tourism and Retreats

Wellness tourism is experiencing a renaissance, often combining travel with health-enhancing activities such as yoga, meditation, spa treatments, and nutritious cuisine. The global wellness tourism market was valued at US\$639 billion in 2017 and is projected to reach US\$1.2 trillion by 2027 (GWI).

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The Resilient Pulse: The Evolution of Health and Wellness Brands in Nigeria

By Azeez Disu

The global landscape of health and wellness is no longer just a luxury niche, it has become a fundamental pillar of the modern economy. Globally, the wellness economy is valued at over US\$5.6 trillion, encompassing sectors from personal care to workplace wellness and restorative tourism. While Africa currently accounts for a relatively small fraction of this global pie, its growth trajectory is unmatched. Africa's wellness sector is valued at approximately \$62 billion and is expanding at an annual rate of 6%, which is double the global average. By 2028, this market is projected to reach \$83 billion, with Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya leading the charge.

In Nigeria, the most populous nation on the continent, the shift is palpable. Driven by urbanisation, a rising middle class, and an increasing awareness of lifestyle-related diseases like diabetes and hypertension, Nigerians are prioritising their health more than ever before. This is not merely a trend, it is a movement. As Amdalat Suleiman, CEO of Spedy Weightloss, observes, "The health and wellness industry has witnessed tremendous growth worldwide, with individuals increasingly prioritising their physical and mental well-being".

A Global Perspective: The Proactive Shift

The worldwide wellness economy

was valued at US\$4.5 trillion in 2018 and is expected to reach approximately US\$6.2 trillion in 2026, according to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI). This global surge is powered by a shift from reactive healthcare, treating illnesses after they occur, to proactive wellness, preventing them through lifestyle choices. Trends like personalised medicine, wearable IoT devices, and digital health are now mainstream.

In Africa, the wellness tourism market alone is estimated at \$14.28 billion in 2026, with projections reaching \$19.16 billion by 2031. This growth is spurred by the expansion of luxury hotel brands and a rising domestic demand for "digital detox" experiences in low-connectivity safari areas.

The Nigerian Market: Data and Dynamics

Nigeria's health and wellness sector is a complex tapestry of traditional practices and cutting-edge technology. Despite infrastructural hurdles, such as having only 4 doctors per 10,000 people, the private sector is filling the gaps with remarkable agility. The market



forecasts for various sub-sectors in Nigeria through 2028 show explosive potential.

The Digital Health and Health Tech sector is projected to have a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20–25 per cent, while Mental Health Services are expected to grow at a CAGR of 12–15 per cent. The Fitness and Active Lifestyle market is forecasted to expand at a CAGR of 10–12 per cent, and the Pharmaceuticals sector is anticipated to grow at a CAGR of 8–10 per cent.

This growth is supported by a youthful population and a growing digital savvy. With over 220 million people, the demand for quality healthcare is skyrocketing.

What Nigerian Brands are Doing Differently

Nigerian wellness brands are not merely copying Western models, they are pioneering a concept called "African Modernism". This involves marrying time-tested African traditions with contemporary innovation and technology.

1. Fusing Tradition with Transparency Arami Essentials, founded by Ore Lawani, is a prime example. The brand focuses on natural, ethically sourced skincare,

using traditional ingredients like shea butter and black soap but presenting them in opulent, high-quality packaging. Lawani notes, "We're all about embracing 'African modernism' – marrying the time-tested wisdom of Africa's beauty traditions with contemporary innovation". Similarly, Vica Natural emphasises transparency in sourcing locally, catering to the "clean beauty" movement.

2. Culturally Relevant Mental Health: In a society where mental health has often been stigmatised or viewed through a spiritual lens,

“The Digital Health and Health Tech sector is projected to have a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20–25 per cent, while Mental Health Services are expected to grow at a CAGR of 12–15 per cent.”

brands like NDIDI are changing the narrative. Founded by clinical psychologist Amanda Iheme, NDIDI integrates culturally relevant mental health services that respect the value systems of Nigerian clients while providing global standards of care. Another player, Ere Wellness, founded by Karina Karunwi, uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to address body image and eating disorders, specifically tailored for Nigerian women. Karunwi states, "Our work is reversing generations of pain and broken relationships with self and others".

3. Digital Inclusivity in Fitness Infrastructural challenges, such as traffic and lack of local gyms, have birthed digital-first fitness brands. Fit Nigeria leverages digital platforms to provide accessible workout routines tailored to the busy Nigerian lifestyle. By making fitness convenient and inclusive, they are reaching a demographic that previously found traditional gym memberships prohibitive.

4. Nutritional Localisation Brands like Nutriviva are producing fortified foods tailored to local tastes and common nutritional deficiencies. Rather than relying on imported supplements, they integrate local ingredients and flavours to increase consumer adherence and affordability. Oleander Life, an agro-processing brand, focuses on underutilised produce like *agbalumo* and *scent leaf* to create value-added wellness products, encouraging local consumption and reducing import dependency.

Emerging Trends Shaping the Future

1. The Rise of Telehealth Telemedicine is perhaps the most transformative trend in Nigeria. Platforms like Helium Health, Doctoora, and 247Medic are bridging the gap between rural patients and urban specialists. Helium Health's telemedicine platform conducted over 100,000 virtual consultations within two years, significantly reducing

hospital congestion.

2. Corporate and Workplace Wellness Forward-thinking Nigerian companies are now incorporating on-site gyms, mental health support, and flexible working arrangements. The corporate wellness market is expanding as organisations recognise that a healthier workforce is a more productive one. This trend is particularly strong in large-size private organisations and the public sector.

3. Wellness Tourism and Retreatment Nigeria is gradually positioning itself as a destination for wellness tourism. From the Ikogosi Warm Springs in Ekiti to the Obudu Mountain Resort, natural assets are being bundled with spa treatments and traditional healing rituals. Government initiatives, such as Rwanda's spa practitioner accreditation, are serving as blueprints for Nigeria to professionalise its wellness tourism sector.

4. The Expansion of HMO Activities Health Maintenance Organisations (HMOs) like Hygeia, AXA Mansard, and Avon are moving beyond simple insurance. They are now leading wellness programs, health screenings, and fitness partnerships, acting as intermediaries that promote preventive care rather than just paying for treatments.

The Role of Expert Grit and Resilience

Starting a wellness brand in Nigeria requires more than a good idea, it requires "grit". Entrepreneurs face systemic issues such as erratic power supply, unreliable logistics, and a consumer preference for imported goods. Edikan Udiong, founder of Oleander Life, highlights the challenge of fragmented supply chains and the lack of commercial farms for local raw materials.

Despite these odds, the resilience of Nigerian entrepreneurs is building a robust ecosystem. "The journey demands more than passion; it requires grit, adaptability, and relentless problem-solving," notes



one industry report. This resilience is paying off as Nigerian brands gain international recognition. Spedy Weightloss and many others have successfully expanded their reach beyond Nigeria's borders, contributing to job creation and revenue generation.

Challenges: The Speed Bumps to Growth

While the outlook is positive, several restraints persist:

- **Infrastructure:** Limited rural connectivity and poor road quality inflate operating costs.
- **Brain Drain:** A significant shortage of medical professionals persists as many migrate for better pay.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Bureaucratic delays in licensing and inconsistent government policies can hinder growth.
- **Financial Constraints:** Accessing early-stage capital remains notoriously difficult for many startups.

The Road Ahead: Strategic Insights for Brands

To thrive in this evolving market, brands must focus on transparency, cultural relevance, and technological integration. The Global Wellness Institute notes that a stable local customer base shields businesses from external demand

shocks. Therefore, brands that can offer healthier products at an affordable price point for the domestic market will secure a durable competitive advantage.

Furthermore, Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) are essential. Collaborations like the Lagos State Health PPP Initiative, which led to a \$10 million investment in a modern cancer centre, show how the private sector can accelerate infrastructure development.

Conclusion: A Resilient Future

The Nigerian health and wellness industry is at a pivotal juncture. It is no longer a fringe sector but a core component of national development and economic stability. By blending the "time-tested wisdom" of African traditions with modern digital solutions, local brands are not only transforming the lives of Nigerians but are also positioning the country as a global hub for wellness excellence.

As the sector continues to urbanise and modernise, the integration of wellness into daily life will become a standard, fostering a healthier and more productive population. For investors and entrepreneurs willing to navigate the complexities with grit, the potential for transformative returns is unprecedented. Nigeria's wellness revolution has only just begun.

SPOTLIGHT

AXA Mansard Health: Redefining Healthcare Leadership in Nigeria



Tope Adeniyi,
CEO, AXA Mansard Health Ltd.

“Every country that wants economic growth should find a way to solve the healthcare problem most cost-effectively,” Renowned economist Pat Utomi once said.

His words underscore the critical link between a nation's prosperity and the health of its people. Yet, in Nigeria, access to affordable, quality healthcare remains a significant challenge amid rising inflation and living costs.

To rescue the situation, health insurance brands are deploying innovative solutions and renewing their commitment to providing quality healthcare to people at affordable prices. One of the remarkable brands striking this balance is AXA Mansard Health—a brand addressing Nigeria's healthcare challenges through digital innovation, strategic partnerships, and a profound commitment to societal well-being. By combining these elements, AXA Mansard Health exemplifies how businesses can align profit motives with the public good, earning trust and

admiration from stakeholders.

Innovation-Driven Solutions

At the core of AXA Mansard Health's strategy lies a bold investment in technology to reduce pressure on healthcare infrastructure and enhance service delivery. The company's telemedicine app allows customers to access medical consultations from anywhere, while its MYAXA App serves as a one-stop hub for managing medical records. Complementing these digital innovations are wellness programs offering gym subscriptions, mental health services, and more.

“On our part, we also invested heavily in technology to help

reduce the pressure on our providers' infrastructure and provide quick and easy access to our customers, and overall, ensured that the quality of healthcare services is not compromised, said Tope Adeniyi, CEO AXA Mansard Health Ltd. “From our telemedicine app that provides access to our customers anywhere and anytime;

to the MYAXA App, which provides a one-stop shop to all medical records of our customers, and our increased investment wellness programs, our goal is to ensure that wellness is not the exclusive preserve of a few”

He furthered, “This decision came at a huge cost to us because we had to ensure that we don't pass on the cost of these investments to our customers and that our providers are not also short-changed. But we believe these are what we need to do to continue growing Nigeria's healthcare ecosystem.”

The company also introduced its international health plan, iMED, to HR and business leaders in 2025 during a breakfast meeting in Lagos.

According to Adeniyi, the plan, which is designed for the evolving needs of today's highly mobile workforce, provides access to over 11,000 hospitals in the US, UK, and around the world.

“As your passport to global healthcare, iMed gives you priority appointments, comprehensive health plans, and a network of over 1,000 premium airport lounges worldwide,” Adeniyi said.

Transformative Partnerships

Recognizing the power of collaboration, AXA Mansard Health has forged impactful partnerships with leading telecommunications technology providers to extend healthcare access nationwide. Collaborations with Airtel, 9mobile, Globacom and Palmpay have introduced affordable micro-health



L-R: Jeff Chinda, Human Resources & Admin Manager, SEPLAT; Tope Adeniyi, CEO AXA Mansard Health; Victoria Vodunnu, Head of People, Strategy & Operation, Flutterwave; and Adeola Adebajo, Executive Director, Business Development, AXA Mansard Health, during the unveil of its international health plan, iMED.

insurance products, enabling millions of Nigerians to access primary care, consultations, and treatments.

Years back, it partnered with MTN Nigeria to offer customers easy and affordable insurance coverage through MTN Y'ello Cover.

One remarkable example is the 2023 launch of an embedded insurance product designed to bridge Nigeria's micro-insurance gap. This initiative allows customers to access low-cost healthcare services and innovative AI-driven solutions, such as chatbot-enabled consultations.

"These partnerships reflect our unwavering commitment to making healthcare affordable and accessible to all Nigerians," notes Olusesan Ogunyooye, Head of Marketing AXA Mansard Insurance Plc. "We're not just building a business; we're committed to a healthier society", he remarked.

Purposeful CSR Initiatives

AXA Mansard Health's corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives further solidify its reputation as a socially responsible brand. Through its AXA Hearts in Action (AHIA) program, employees volunteer their time, skills, and resources to make a difference in vulnerable communities.

"Through the AHIA, our employees do not just give time to great causes; we work together for a better future. We share our knowledge and expertise as a people to act for human progress by protecting what matters and helping vulnerable communities around us," said Rashidat Adebisi, Chief Client Officer, AXA Mansard Insurance Plc.

Recently, more than 100 of its employees donated over 250 pints of blood to the Lagos State University Teaching Hospital (LUTH) following its partnership with the hospital to close the blood shortage gap and strengthen the health sector.

The Head of Corporate Services and Public Relations at LUTH, Omolola Olubukunola Fakeye, expressed gratitude for the gesture, stating, "The generous support from AXA Mansard has made a meaningful difference to our blood bank and



L-R: Adeola Adebajo, Executive Director, Business Development, AXA Mansard Health; Olayori Olajide, Compensation & Benefits Manager, Meristem Securities; Karim Issa, Director, WECARE Insurance Brokers; and Olusesan Ogunyooye, Head, Marketing AXA Mansard Insurance during the unveil of its international health plan, iMED.

ultimately to the lives of patients. Blood donations are invaluable in many critical treatments, and initiatives like AXA Mansard's blood drive bring immense relief to the healthcare system. We are sincerely grateful for this partnership and the dedication of AXA Mansard's employees."

According to Tope Adeniyi, CEO of AXA Mansard Health Limited, the initiatives are other ways the company demonstrates its commitment to total wellness for everyone.

During one of the company's outreaches, Adeniyi said, "This medical outreach is another in the series of programmes we have listed to improve community health this year. You will recall that early in the year, we donated medical equipment to general hospitals in remote areas across the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. We are not relenting. We are poised to do more. It is our wish that wellness is ubiquitous anywhere you turn in Nigeria. And we are embarking on this journey one community at a time".

Reacting to the initiative, Alhaji Otunbade Nurudeen, the Abule Oja Community Development Association Chairman, thanked AXA Mansard for considering the community for such a laudable

initiative.

"We're delighted today to have AXA Mansard conduct this outreach here. We are grateful for the investment in time, the mosquito nets, the health talk, and the screening. These are significant gestures that will help our community stay healthy, especially in this current economic situation," he said.

In addition, AXA Mansard Health has provided free health insurance to 100 children in the Chess In Slums initiative, underscoring its commitment to inclusive protection—a key pillar of the company's sustainability agenda.

A Model for Brands Everywhere

AXA Mansard Health's dedication to innovation, partnership, and societal impact offers a blueprint for other brands seeking to strengthen public trust and contribute to national development. As Nigeria grapples with healthcare challenges, AXA Mansard Health stands out as a shining example of how businesses can drive meaningful change.

"Our purpose guides every decision we make to act for human progress. It's about creating solutions that resonate with our stakeholders and leave a lasting legacy in societies where we operate", Ogunyooye concludes.

SPOTLIGHT

How Reliance Health and Platos Health are Transforming Diabetes Care in Nigeria



In a significant move to enhance the lives of Nigerians living with diabetes, Reliance Health, the company behind Reliance HMO in Nigeria, and Platos.

Health have successfully completed a pilot study demonstrating the transformative impact of innovative health tech solutions on chronic disease management. This collaboration highlights the power of technology to empower individuals to take charge of their health while achieving substantial cost savings.

The study set out to evaluate the effectiveness and economic benefits of Platos, a virtual platform for chronic disease management, for Reliance HMO enrollees. The results reveal a promising future for diabetes care in Nigeria, with notable health improvements and cost reductions.

Key Outcomes from the Study

- **Notable Improvement in Blood Sugar Levels:** Over 12 weeks (about 3 months) of treatment, participants saw an average reduction of approximately 12% in fasting blood sugar levels, a critical factor in managing diabetes effectively.

- **Significant Reduction in Insulin Usage:** The total insulin required to maintain blood sugar control dropped by about 15%, from 94 IU

to 80 IU. This reduction is particularly impressive, with two participants achieving a remarkable 43% and 20% decrease in insulin use, respectively. The decreased need for insulin translates to estimated savings of over N88,000 for both the insurance provider and its enrollees during the three months under review.

These outcomes underscore the positive impact of integrating advanced health tech solutions into chronic disease management. By leveraging the virtual platform provided by Platos Health, Reliance Health enrollees were able to achieve better health outcomes with fewer resources, enhancing their quality of life while reducing healthcare costs.

Dr. Ugochi Nwosu, Senior Vice President of Clinical Services, Reliance Health, remarked: "This pilot study demonstrates the incredible potential of technology to improve patient health outcomes and reduce costs. We are proud to partner with Platos Health to bring such impactful solutions to our enrollees."

Platos Health's Senior Medical Advisor, Dr. Itopa Jimoh, added: "We are delighted to see the positive changes in the lives of Reliance HMO enrollees. Our mission is to make effective chronic disease management accessible to everyone, and this study reinforces the value of our platform in achieving that goal."

This successful pilot study not only showcases the effectiveness of Platos Health's platform but also highlights the commitment of Reliance Health to invest in innovative solutions that empower individuals and transform healthcare delivery in Nigeria. Together, these companies are paving the way for a healthier, more cost-effective future.

About Reliance Health

Reliance Health is a leading health tech company providing innovative healthcare solutions to individuals and organizations.

Through its health insurance plans, telemedicine services, and a network of healthcare providers, Reliance Health is committed to making healthcare accessible and affordable.

About Platos Health

Platos Health is a virtual platform dedicated to chronic disease management. By leveraging technology, Platos Health aims to provide effective and personalized care for individuals managing chronic conditions, ultimately improving their quality of life.

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SPOTLIGHT

Beyond the Capsule: Geneith Pharmaceuticals' Dual Legacy of Manufacturing Excellence and Community Well-being



Umenwa E. Emmanuel
CEO/MD

Geneith Pharmaceuticals Limited

The landscape of healthcare in Nigeria is fraught with significant challenges, from persistent high disease burdens to the imperative need for medicine security. Yet, amidst these struggles, indigenous pharmaceutical companies such as Geneith Pharmaceuticals Limited are not merely surviving; they are actively driving change, moving beyond importing and marketing towards investing heavily in local capacity and crucial public health interventions. Having recently marked its 25th anniversary, Geneith's journey reflects a sustained commitment to bridging healthcare gaps, positioning itself as a pivotal force in securing the nation's drug supply and championing the well-being of Nigerians.

Building Local Capacity for Medicine Security

Founded in 2000, Geneith Pharmaceuticals began as a small marketing outfit, growing steadily to become a nationally recognised pharmaceutical player. Over its 25 years, the company has expanded access to essential medicines, delivering globally compliant artemisinin-based combination therapies crucial for malaria control, alongside a wide-ranging portfolio that includes antibiotics, metabolic drugs, analgesics, supplements, and antifungals. The company has transitioned from a malaria diagnostics firm into a diversified pharmaceutical entity boasting over 100 registered products across various therapeutic areas.

However, the next phase of Geneith's evolution is arguably the most critical for national health security. Industry leaders, gathering

to celebrate Geneith's silver jubilee, stressed that countries that dominate global pharmaceutical production also control pricing, access, and innovation. In this context, Geneith's strategic decision to push into manufacturing, despite complex economic and regulatory challenges, is viewed as vital for long-term drug security in Nigeria.

Geneith is now entering a new phase anchored on manufacturing strength, research, and long-term sustainability. Chief Executive Officer, Geneith Pharmaceuticals Limited, **Mr. Umenwa Emmanuel**, affirmed the company's direction: **"We have spent 25 years expanding access to essential medicines,"**. He further emphasised the strategic pivot: **"The next phase of our growth prioritises local production, quality systems, and sustainable operations."**. This renewed focus aligns with federal efforts to reduce Nigeria's reliance on imported drugs, ensuring affordability and consistent medicine supply for chronic pain, diabetes, neurological disorders, and fungal infections, alongside the perpetual challenge of malaria.

As the saying goes, *"The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second best time is now."* Geneith's investment in expanded local manufacturing facilities signals a deep-seated belief that investing in local capacity is paramount to achieving sustainable healthcare outcomes.

The N1 Billion Fight: Mobilising Youth Against Malaria

Geneith Pharmaceuticals' dedication to the well-being of Nigerians extends far beyond its manufacturing plants, demonstrated vividly through





its robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, particularly in combating Nigeria's staggering malaria burden. Malaria is described by Geneith's leadership as a national emergency, responsible for 27% of global cases and 31% of deaths, especially among children under five. In 2022 alone, Nigeria recorded approximately 66.7 million cases and over 189,000 deaths.

In response to this crisis, Geneith, in partnership with CEOAfrica, launched the ambitious **Geneith Health Competition (GHC)**, a youth-focused initiative targeting junior and senior secondary students as well as tertiary institution undergraduates across all 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). This initiative is unique due to its scale and financial backing, with over **₦1 billion committed to the programme**—₦400 million earmarked for student prizes and ₦600 million designated for educational materials and gifts. This investment positions the GHC as the largest health competition of its kind in Africa.

The campaign, endorsed by the Association of Community Pharmacists of Nigeria (ACPN) and the Federal Government, focuses on education, advocacy, and innovation, positioning students as the primary agents of change. The National Chairman of the ACPN, Pharm. Ambrose Ezech, emphasized that the fight against malaria is a collective endeavour requiring the involvement of all sectors—government, private organisations, and communities—to devise innovative solutions.

The motivation behind empowering young people is clear. Geneith's CEO, Mr. Emmanuel, articulated this vision, stating: **"We decided to fund this project as a way of supporting the fight against malaria."** He

continued, stressing the pivotal role of the younger generation: **"Eliminating this disease in Nigeria will become a realistic goal, especially since our target audience—youth and students—are the driving force behind any vision that needs to be realized."**

The GHC, powered by Geneith's Coatal Forte Softgel antimalarial medication, challenges students to design and execute innovative awareness campaigns tailored to their communities, fostering lasting behavioural change in households. Students are encouraged to seize this opportunity to transform health narratives in Nigeria through workshops, health walks, and community outreach programmes, developing essential leadership qualities for public health advocacy.

Championing Preventive Healthcare at the Grassroots

Beyond the national malaria competition, Geneith demonstrates its commitment to community well-being through direct engagement focused on preventive healthcare. To mark its 25th anniversary, the company championed the cause of regular health checks in Lagos with a public health walk and a subsequent free medical outreach.

This focus on prevention stems from the unfortunate reality that many health conditions often remain undetected until they become life-threatening. The Assistant General Manager, Sales and Marketing, Geneith Pharmaceuticals Limited, **Pharm. Abimbola Bowoto**, highlighted the importance of early detection: **"We are using this 25th anniversary to encourage Nigerians to routinely check their health, especially blood pressure and blood sugar, which are silent killers. Prevention remains better than cure,"**. He reiterated the straightforward philosophy guiding the initiative: **"The message is simple: health is wealth. Nigerians must take their health seriously,"**.

The free medical outreach held for residents of Lekki and surrounding communities, included basic health screenings such as blood pressure and blood sugar testing. This activity reflects the company's belief that "giving back has always been part of who we are," **Bowoto said**.

Head of Hospital and Institutional Business at Geneith Pharmaceuticals Limited, **Pharm. Judith Ngozi Udeh**, stressed the relational aspect of these interventions: **"Community engagement is critical in healthcare. It helps us build trust, educate the public, and return value to the people who have supported our brand over the years,"**. Pharm. Udeh herself embodies this dedication to community and youth, having recently been honoured by the Nigerian Association of University Students (NAUS) for her commitment to youth development, mentorship, and healthcare delivery.

Geneith's model offers a blueprint for addressing Nigeria's ongoing healthcare challenges. By strategically combining adherence to international quality standards in local production with widespread community engagement and youth empowerment, the company has successfully strengthened the pharmaceutical value chain while actively contributing to disease control efforts nationwide. This dual focus on industry innovation and proactive public health CSR underscores a vision for a healthier, more resilient Nigeria in the decades to come.

SPOTLIGHT



VerveLife 8.0:

How Verve Transformed Fitness into Africa's Biggest Lifestyle Movement

The 2025 edition of VerveLife, themed 'Elev8', was an energy explosion that cemented its status as Africa's biggest fitness party and a burgeoning Pan-African movement. Powered by Verve, Africa's leading payment cards and digital tokens brand, the grand finale saw approximately ten thousand fitness lovers, lifestyle enthusiasts, and good-vibes-only folks converge at the iconic Eko Convention Centre in Victoria Island, Lagos.

VerveLife 8.0 successfully merged fitness with technology, mobility, and wellness, reflecting the evolving lifestyles of modern consumers. The event, which took place on Saturday, November 1, 2025, raised the bar in scale, production, and energy, demonstrating that it has grown beyond a mere fitness event into a holistic lifestyle movement.

Elevating the Movement: Vision and Culture

For the Interswitch Group, VerveLife is not just about physical activity; it is about building a community and championing a

culture of wellness across the continent.

Over the years, VerveLife has grown beyond just a fitness event into a holistic lifestyle movement.

The scale of this shift was recognized by the leadership team. Cherry Eromosele, Executive Vice President, Group Marketing and Corporate Communications, Interswitch Group, highlighted the cultural impact: *"VerveLife has officially evolved from a fitness event to a movement. It continues to unite people through energy, wellness, and community. Every year, we see stronger participation, deeper connections, and greater enthusiasm from attendees across Africa who share a passion for healthy living and self-improvement. At Interswitch, through our leading payment cards and digital tokens brand—Verve—we are proud to provide a platform that not only promotes physical fitness but also encourages balance, motivation, and a spirit of togetherness. This 8th edition, themed 'Elev8', truly embodies the Verve spirit, rewarding resilience, celebrating*

fitness, and inspiring people to live fully. It's about pushing beyond limits and celebrating every milestone and victory. We're delighted to see VerveLife become an avenue where fitness meets fun, where hard work meets reward, and where people connect over a shared drive to be better every day."

The Interswitch Group further affirmed the success, stating: "We didn't just raise the bar; We completely #ELEV8ed it".

Sweat, Passion, and Purpose: The Trainer Journeys

VerveLife 8.0 featured a star-studded lineup of elite trainers from across Africa, including Kemen, Trebla, Mayorfit, BodybyJane, CeeJay Kimani, King of Squats (KOS), Mamiki Slayqueen, Queen Fitness from South Africa, Alvin Lee from Kenya, Sandra, Dolapo, Macblake, Benfit, TL Funky, HSP Aesthetics, Dami among others.

The event's success stems from the genuine passion of its community and trainers, many of whom have witnessed the event's monumental growth firsthand.

Trainer JaneDoveyy, who progressed from an attendee at VerveLife 1.0 and 2.0 to backing up a lead trainer at 3.0, and finally becoming a lead trainer at 8.0, reflected on the sheer magnitude of the latest edition. She noted that her debut as a lead trainer at 8.0 was everything and more: "My debut at Africa's Biggest Fitness Party—VerveLife 8.0 #Elev8 2025 was everything and more. I was honoured to have shared the stage as one of the lead trainers, moving, flowing, and connecting with the most beautiful crowd". She added, emphasizing the brand's exponential growth: *"I've seen every VerveLife season—from the eyes of an attendee, a dreamer, and from the heart of a lead trainer—and I can boldly say this: 8.0 changed everything. The growth, the scale, the production, the energy—it was a breathtaking out-of-body experience"*.

For coaches like Coach Trebla, the event signaled a major cultural shift in Nigeria and Africa: *"Watching thousands gather not for a concert or a celebrity show,*



noted the extensive reach of the movement: *“This year has been a remarkable one, traveling across different states in Nigeria, being featured in several VerveLife activations, meeting incredible people, sharing my passion for wellness, and inspiring lives through fitness and positive energy. Each city had its own story, its own energy, and its own testimony”*. Similarly, Dami transitioned from being a mere attendee in 2021 to a trainer and model at the 2025 edition: *“VerveLife 8.0 was indeed an Elevation for me.”*

Reward, Resilience, and Integration

VerveLife 8.0 was preceded by a series of vibrant satellite events across Nigeria, Uganda, and Kenya. The grand finale in Lagos featured a robust lineup of fitness performances, obstacle course challenges, and breakout sessions, including a nutrition and lifestyle masterclass. A fully equipped kiddies' corner ensured that nobody

was left out.

The event deeply integrated brand partners such as Google Play, Interswitch, Quickteller, Hygeia HMO, Amstel, Reelfruit, and Chery Automobile. Quickteller, for instance, offered exciting booth activities and giveaways.

In a major display of customer loyalty and reward, Verve and its partners elevated the lives of lucky attendees. All participants had to do was link their Verve Cards to Google Play and perform a transaction to qualify for major prizes. After hours of sweat and adrenaline, Chidera Nkem drove away in a brand-new car (courtesy of Verve x Google Play and Carloha Chery), while Peter Alfred and Paul Amedu each went home with ₦1 million.

Blakefitnesss, who noted that the VerveLife team “truly took it to the roof”, expressed appreciation for the visionaries who are “constantly pushing the limits and shaping something bigger than fitness. You're building culture”.

The Afterparty: Fitness Meets Fun

The festivities reached their climax with an electrifying after-party that blended fitness celebration with music and lifestyle. The vibes were unmatched, featuring performances by King Ojem, Shoday, Alternate Sound, and the LOUD Choir, before the legendary Timaya shut down the stage. The Quickteller InsomniaQ Hour, featuring DJ Toh Bad, also kept the crowd moving. DJs X-Ray, Maze & Xtreme, Toh Bad, and Crowd Kontroller spun back-to-back hits, keeping the energy rolling deep into the night. Nigeria's top celebrities, including Tobi Bakre, Broda Shaggi, Timi Dakolo, and Dr. Sid, also joined in on the fun.

As the curtain falls on 8.0, the excitement for the next season is already mounting, as attendees are optimistic that if VerveLife 8.0 brought this much heat, VerveLife 9.0 is going to be a whole new level of epic.

but for fitness and health felt powerful. It was more than an event; it was a statement. It showed that people are beginning to value what truly matters: that movement, wellness, and community are becoming part of who we are. We're not just working out anymore; we're building a lifestyle, a tribe, a future where health is celebrated just like music and art”.

The movement is also deeply inspirational, proving that dreams rooted in consistency and authenticity can be realized. Queen Fitness from South Africa, who led thousands of people through a workout, shared her journey: *“Still in awe of this moment, leading thousands of incredible people through a fun workout in Nigeria at Africa's biggest fitness party. From not knowing what I want to do with my life to living my purpose, inspiring people through my love and passion for fitness. I'm proof that dreams really do come true when you stay consistent and authentic to who you are”*. She concluded with an empowering message: *“If I can do it, so can you. Dream big, stay real, and never stop showing up for yourself”*.

Other trainers shared equally powerful testimonies of transformation. CeeJay Kimani



OPINION



Uncovered: Tobacco Industry's Deadly, Discredited 'Harm Reduction' Trick

By Robert Egbe

Despite the millions of people its products kill every year, and the thousands more whose health is destroyed, the tobacco industry is aggressively lobbying governments and the public to embrace newer kinds of harmful tobacco products that it presents as “less harmful” or “safer” than traditional tobacco use.

According to the World Health Organisation, the industry is particularly bent on luring young people to use its so-called “smokeless” nicotine-filled tobacco products, so that it can create a new generation of addicts. The industry regards these novel products as its future, meaning it quietly hopes that these youth will replace those who die or whose health is destroyed from traditional tobacco use so that the industry can continue making huge profits at the expense of peoples’ lives.

Confronted with clear evidence of

the deadly harm of tobacco use, the tobacco industry now claims that it wants people to stop smoking. However, it has refused to stop manufacturing cigarettes or other tobacco products – it makes over five trillion cigarettes every year. Rather, it is actively and hypocritically expanding its production in, and especially, lower-income countries. In Africa, for instance, it is primarily targeting the huge youth populations in countries like Nigeria, Egypt, and South Africa, among others, which it sees as untapped market potential for its products of death and disease. According to the WHO, between 2005 and 2020, tobacco leaf production decreased globally by 4.6 per cent, but in Africa – egged on by the tobacco industry – it increased by 35.7 per cent. The industry knows that many countries on the continent are wracked by political instability, social inequality, and a weak legislative environment, and it is exploiting this to produce and market its products with limited restrictions.

One of its tactics to hoodwink governments and regulators and ensnare new users to tobacco use – in whatever form – is to introduce fancy novel tobacco products. These alternative nicotine products include vapes, also known as electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) and other electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS), heated tobacco products (HTPs), snus, and oral nicotine pouches, among others. Of course, its claims that these novel products are “safer” are

untrue: traditional tobacco products were never safe in the first place. More importantly, tobacco use is harmful in all forms, and there is no safe level of exposure to tobacco. Not even farmers who grow the tobacco plant are safe.

These novel products are part of what the industry calls its Tobacco Harm Reduction (THR) strategies. This discredited tactic has its roots in the United States of America of the 1940s, and it has now been repackaged to impress unsuspecting, contemporary audiences across the world. For instance, almost 70 years ago, the industry introduced filtered cigarettes as part of its THR, falsely claiming that they were, yes, “safer” than other types of tobacco. However, the mass migration of tobacco users to filtered cigarettes did not prevent a rise in lung cancer. Another failed THR strategy introduced by the industry in more recent years is the “reduced carcinogen” cigarettes and products which heated rather than burned tobacco, delivering a vapour into smokers’ lungs. Contrary to the industry’s claims, researchers found that these products were neither safe nor reduced user harm.

Vapes, HTPs, snus, oral nicotine pouches, etc, are the latest kids on the tobacco harm-reduction block, which the industry claims will help people who are unwilling or unable to quit smoking. What the industry is often silent on is that these products contain nicotine, a highly addictive substance from tobacco



that can be as addictive as cocaine and heroin. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm the developing brain.

According to the European Respiratory Society (ERS), evidence is increasing that novel tobacco and nicotine products constitute gateways to nicotine addiction and the initiation of smoking among youth. A May 2024 ERS report referenced a recent review of 189 studies on vaping and e-cigarettes which concluded that non-smoking youths who use e-cigarettes have substantially higher likelihood of starting smoking.

Furthermore, and contrary to what the industry says, there are no safe nicotine products. For instance, Snus contains several harmful substances, including heavy metals, polyaromatic hydrocarbons, tobacco-specific nitrosamines and tobacco alkaloids, such as nicotine which can damage the cardiovascular system. A June 2023 study by the Norwegian Institute of Public Health showed that the risk of throat and pancreatic cancer was three and two times greater, respectively, among frequent snus users. Furthermore, snus use has a detrimental impact on oral health and is statistically significantly associated with gum bleeding.

Vapes and other e-cigarettes are battery-powered and deliver nicotine through a liquid which turns into an aerosol. The e-liquids come in fruit flavours that appeal to youth. Cartridge-based and disposable e-cigarettes contain nicotine salts that do not produce vapour or visible emissions when the device is used and may make the product even more addictive. They almost always contain harmful ingredients, including nicotine. Acrolein, a known ingredient of many e-cigarettes, causes irreversible lung damage. No e-cigarette has been considered safe and effective by the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in helping smokers quit.

These and more are why public health officials and tobacco control advocates have urged the government not to fall for the



current phase of the tobacco harm reduction trick, which, is designed to keep the tobacco industry in its deadly business.

In Nigeria alone, tobacco use claims about 26,000 lives and inflicts debilitating conditions and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like cancer, heart disease, and chronic respiratory diseases on thousands more. The solution to this man-made crisis is not THR, and it is certainly neither legalising nor making these deadly novel tobacco products available to the Nigerian public.

Rather several evidence-based methods have been scientifically proven safe and effective for quitting smoking. These include:

Counselling – Behavioural counselling by certified tobacco control and other medical experts increases the chances of quitting smoking successfully.

“In Nigeria alone, tobacco use claims about 26,000 lives and inflicts debilitating conditions and non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like cancer, heart disease, and chronic respiratory diseases on thousands more.”

Medications – Several countries have approved some medications shown to be effective in helping people quit smoking. These medications include five forms of nicotine replacement therapy and two non-nicotine medications.

Combination of counselling and medication – Although counselling and medication are each proven treatments alone, using them in combination can more than double the chances of quitting smoking.

In addition, some popular policies to reduce tobacco use include Increasing tobacco taxes, adding graphic warning signs to tobacco product packaging, banning tobacco product advertisements, passing laws to discourage young people, and using peer-based approaches to help people quit tobacco.

Furthermore, Nigeria should emulate countries like Côte d’Ivoire, whose cabinet has just approved a decree that extends the country’s smoking ban to all forms of novel and emerging products. This will shield non-smokers from second-hand and third-hand smoke, which are proven causes of NCDs.

In summary, the government should reject the tobacco industry’s deadly THR claims because smokers who switch to these alternative products are still exposed to toxic and carcinogenic substances that can kill them or damage their health.

Egbe is a tobacco control advocate at Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA).



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LG Electronics Partners with AXA Mansard to Bring Quality Healthcare Closer to Customers

In a bold move that places customer wellbeing at the centre of its core value, LG Electronics Nigeria has announced a groundbreaking partnership with AXA Mansard Health, one of Nigeria's leading health insurance providers. This collaboration announced at a press conference at LG Office, Lagos, is aimed at providing LG customers with access to basic healthcare consultations and treatment anywhere, anytime.

In today's fast-paced world, access to healthcare shouldn't be a luxury, it should be a lifestyle. With this initiative, LG is making it easier for its customers to enjoy peace of mind not just through reliable products, but also through affordable, accessible health services. The LG - AXA Mansard Health scheme offers LG customers convenient access to healthcare consultations and treatment for minor illnesses. The scheme provides easy access to healthcare services, including telemedicine consultations, pharmacy support, and in-hospital care for minor illnesses.

"We don't just want to be in

people's homes through our appliances, we want to be part of their lives in meaningful ways," said Mr. Hyoung Sub Ji Managing Director, LG Electronics West Africa. "Partnering with AXA Mansard Health enables us to offer something truly impactful: the assurance that no matter where life takes you, you can access quality healthcare services."

He added that the health scheme is designed to bridge the gap between LG customers and healthcare providers, including hospitals and pharmacies. "Those who purchase LG products are categorized under the standard, classic and premium plan

With this simple health cover," he noted, "users can now access medications worth up to ₦60,000 and receive hospitalization cover of up to ₦50,000 per year."

Through this partnership, eligible LG customers will receive access to AXA Mansard's basic health insurance coverage, which includes doctor consultations, prescribed medication, and treatments at select health facilities across Nigeria. The goal is to ease the burden of everyday health concerns while

promoting a culture of wellness.

Mr. Tope Adeniyi, MD/CEO, AXA Mansard Health, added: "Health is the most valuable asset anyone can have. Our partnership with LG Electronics is a powerful step toward making health insurance a norm rather than a luxury. We're excited to reach even more Nigerians and make healthcare more human, accessible, and effective."

This initiative builds on LG Electronics' growing legacy of care and community support. In 2023, the company provided free annual medical insurance to 100 of its top dealers and their families. A gesture that clearly demonstrates LG's dedication not just to business, but to the wellbeing of those who help drive its success.

"With programs like these, H.S Ji added, we're showing that LG is more than a technology brand, we're a people-first brand. We care about the lives behind the loyalty."

Our commitment to Nigeria's healthcare system has grown steadily over the years, reflecting LG's broader mission to improve lives not just through innovative technology, but also through meaningful partnerships and initiatives that embody our brand ethos: Life's Good.

Whether it's powering your home or protecting your health, LG continues to find new ways to add value where it matters most, your everyday life.

SPOTLIGHT

The Science of Personalised Care: How Reload Vitamins is Redefining the Wellness Landscape



In an era where the pace of life often outruns our physical reserves, the quest for health has shifted from merely avoiding illness to achieving peak vitality. At the forefront of this movement is Reload Vitamins, a brand that has recently solidified its status as a market leader by being crowned the "Best Multivitamin Brand" at the 2025 Consumers Value Awards. This accolade is not merely a trophy on a shelf; it is a testament to a brand philosophy that rejects the "one size fits all" approach in favour of precision nutrition tailored to every stage of life.

A DNA Rooted in Quality and Variety

The meteoric rise of Reload Vitamins is built upon a foundation of three core promises: Quality, Value for Money, and Variety.

Unlike generic supplements, Reload has engrained these values into its organisational DNA, ensuring every product—from immune boosters to energy supplements—delivers on its specific purpose. This commitment to variety ensures that whether a consumer is an "Alpha man" seeking optimal energy or a woman over 50 looking for "ageless beauty" and radiance, there is a formula

specifically designed for their unique physiological needs.

Redefining Vitality Across Generations

Reload Vitamins has successfully redefined wellness by addressing the niche requirements of different demographics. For the modern man, Reload Men's Formula provides a powerhouse of 24 wholesome fruits and vegetables alongside essential minerals like Lycopene and Boron to bolster heart health and testosterone production. Simultaneously, the brand has revolutionised the "performance" sector with Reload Performance, a uniquely formulated blend designed to ignite desire and enhance stamina, offering a lasting corrective action for sexual health rather than a temporary fix.

For women, the brand focuses on timeless beauty and internal fortitude. The Reload Women's Formula promotes radiant skin and "clear, sharp white eyes" through a meticulous selection of antioxidants like Resveratrol and Lutein. For those in the later chapters of life, the Women's 50+ Formula reinforces complete health, helping mature women embrace every moment with confidence and vitality.

The Pediatric Gold Standard

The brand's commitment to excellence is perhaps most evident in its range for children. Reload4Kidz and Reload Infant Drops have been acknowledged for achieving the standards set by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for micronutrient and vitamin mixes. By providing critical nutrients like DHA, Choline, and Inositol, Reload ensures that children have the "building blocks" necessary for optimal intellectual, neurological, and immunological development.

"At the forefront of this movement is Reload Vitamins, a brand that has recently solidified its status as a market leader by being crowned the "Best Multivitamin Brand" at the 2025 Consumers Value Awards."



during their most formative years.

A Note on Consumer Trust

Winning the "Best Multivitamin Brand" award reflects a deep-seated trust from consumers who have experienced the "Value for Money" that Reload provides. In a world of fleeting "dieting trends," the brand stays focused on basic nutrition principles, utilizing a Proprietary Reload Energy Blend and rare fruits to offer micronutrients that are often missing from modern diets.

Speaking on this achievement, Dr.

Joseph A. James, Country Manager of Reload Vitamins, remarked: *"Our success at the 2025 Consumers Value Awards is a reflection of our unwavering commitment to the individual. We believe that health is a personal journey, and our mission has always been to provide the precise nutritional tools required for every man, woman, and child to not just live, but to thrive. When we promise quality, we are promising a better quality of life for our consumers."*

The Future of Wellness

By combining scientific rigor—such as the inclusion of 10 billion CFU Probiotics for gut health—with a deep understanding of human lifestyle needs, Reload Vitamins is doing more than selling supplements; it is empowering a healthier population. From Reload Iron Plus for pregnant women to Reload Calcium Care for bone resilience, the brand continues to prove that when it comes to health, there is no substitute for precision. As they move beyond 2025, Reload remains dedicated to ensuring that "age is just a number and vitality knows no bounds".



Top 6 Health and Wellness Trends Driving Business Growth

contd from pg 10

In Nigeria and West Africa, boutique resorts and wellness retreats are emerging as desirable destinations for domestic and international visitors seeking rejuvenation. These offerings often include traditional African healing practices, eco-friendly accommodations, and customised wellness programmes, creating a niche market with significant growth potential.

5. Natural and Eco-Friendly Products

Consumers globally are becoming more conscious of the ingredients in their personal care and household products. The demand for organic, natural, and non-toxic alternatives is rising sharply, with the global organic personal care market expected to reach US\$25.1 billion by 2025 (Research and Markets).

In Nigeria, this trend is reflected in the increasing popularity of locally produced organic skincare, herbal remedies, and environmentally friendly cleaning products. Entrepreneurs are exploring sustainable sourcing and production methods to meet this demand, creating opportunities for export as well as local consumption.

6. Workplace Wellness

As organisations recognise the link between employee health and productivity, workplace wellness programmes are expanding rapidly. Globally, the corporate wellness market was valued at over US\$52 billion in 2019 and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 6.8% (Research and Markets).

In Nigeria, forward-thinking companies now incorporate on-site gyms, mental health support, flexible working arrangements, and mindfulness sessions. This trend is expected to accelerate as the importance of employee well-being becomes central to organisational culture, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Rise of a Responsible Giant: Rite Foods' Blueprint for Wellness and Sustainability



Saleem Adegunwa
MD, Rite Foods

In the fiercely competitive landscape of Nigeria's Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector, one indigenous brand has proven that commercial excellence and profound social impact are not mutually exclusive. Rite Foods Limited has established itself not merely as a producer of popular snacks and beverages, but as a corporate champion dedicated to environmental stewardship and community empowerment, solidifying its role in advancing national well-being and fulfilling global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Setting the Gold Standard in the Industry

Rite Foods stands as Nigeria's foremost indigenous producer of quality snacks and beverages, boasting an expansive portfolio that includes the 13 variants of Bigi carbonated soft drinks, the premium Bigi table water, five variants of Sosa fruit drink, the powerful Fearless energy drink, and sausage brands such as Rite Spicy Beef, Bigi beef,

and Bigi Flex sausage rolls. This impressive range is produced in a world-class facility equipped with state-of-the-art technology.

This commitment to quality and innovation has propelled the company up Nigeria's most credible brand performance rankings. Drawing on innovation, quality, and resilience, Rite Foods climbed five spots in the prestigious 2025 Top 50

Brands Nigeria ranking, moving from 27th place in 2024 to an impressive 22nd place. Since its debut in 2021, the company has leapfrogged 28 places, demonstrating sustained growth and strong brand equity.

Reflecting on this remarkable achievement, Managing Director, Seleem Adegunwa, commented, "We are immensely proud to see Rite Foods recognised once again among the Top 50 brands powering Nigeria, and even more delighted to have moved up five places this year." He added that the success reflects "our team's passion, our consumers' loyalty, and the unyielding Nigerian spirit that drives us to keep raising the bar."

The company's commitment to excellence and its people-centric approach is cemented by its focus on integrity, accountability, and respect for both processes and people, as noted by Mr. Adegunwa: "At Rite Foods, compliance is not just a requirement, it is a mind-set. It defines who we are, how we operate, and the standards we uphold. We hold ourselves accountable to the highest ethical standards, and this commitment shapes our relationships with employees, consumers, and partners alike."

The Circular Economy: Turning Waste into Well-being

Rite Foods' dedication to Nigerian well-being goes far beyond its consumables and is anchored in its comprehensive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) framework known as EYEC—focusing on Environmental Stewardship, Youth Empowerment, Education, and Community Development.

A vital component of this strategy is





the 'Riteonthebeach' project, a transformative environmental cleanup and recycling initiative launched in partnership with Pop Beach Club. This project aligns directly with the global push for circular economy models and complements government campaigns like the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) framework, accelerating Nigeria's journey toward a greener future.

During the 2025 Plastic Free July campaign, Rite Foods achieved the successful removal of 40 tonnes of plastic waste from Lagos, underscoring its significant role in environmental stewardship. The initiative involved large-scale beach clean-ups, community education, and the distribution of over 30,000 recovery bags across neighbourhoods and malls. Since its inception, the initiative—now in its fifth year—has cleared over 15 kilometres of shoreline across beaches like Tarkwa Bay, Ilado, and Ilashe of plastic bottles.

This massive environmental cleanup is intrinsically linked to public health and wellness. By recovering plastic waste, Rite Foods helps reduce

hazards to waterways, biodiversity, and climate. Ekuma Eze, Head of Corporate Affairs & Sustainability, highlighted the urgency of shared responsibility: "Every bottle recovered is one less hazard to our waterways, biodiversity, and climate. Plastic is not the problem, improper disposal is, and we are leading the charge for a sustainable solution through Riteonthebeach."

Also as Ekuma Eze notes, drawing from Igbo philosophy: "ndu mmiri, ndu azu," meaning the life of water, the life of fish. This proverb beautifully illustrates the company's view that the relationship between water and humanity proves that "our individual well-being is inseparable from the well-being of our environment". Furthermore, Rite Foods ensures sustainable nourishment by linking environmental care to food quality and safety.

The company also focuses heavily on reducing its own carbon footprint, powering over 95% of its operations using solar or natural gas—significantly below the industry average—demonstrating its commitment to SDG 13: Climate

Action.

Educating the Future: SDGs in the Classroom

For Rite Foods, sustainability is a cyclical process where environmental success directly translates into social benefit. The proceeds generated from recycled plastics are funneled into community projects, notably supporting back-to-school programmes and scholarships.

As part of its CSR commitment, the company recently donated educational materials, including school bags and exercise books, to 2,000 pupils across 10 schools in Lagos, Ogun, and Abuja. What makes this initiative truly transformative is the innovative use of waste: the school bags were manufactured using recycled nylon waste from the company's own product packaging, such as labels from Fearless Energy Drinks and sausage wrappers.

This effort eases the financial burden on parents while simultaneously educating children about the value of recycling and circular economy practices. This initiative powerfully addresses key SDGs: SDG 4: Quality Education (by supporting academic growth) and SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals (through collaborations with technical partners and communities).

Ekuma Eze underscored the long-term vision of these efforts, stating: "Our CSR programme is symbolic of the role children play in nation-building. By encouraging education and sustainability, we are shaping a generation that understands the value of learning and environmental stewardship."

The collective impact of these initiatives earned Rite Foods four major awards in 2025, including 'Best Health-Focused CSR Programme of the Year' and 'Education Empowerment Champion of the Year' at the Social Impact and Sustainability Awards (SISA) among other numerous awards.

Rite Foods is demonstrating that true business success is measured not only by market share but by the health of the communities and the environment it serves. It provides a compelling case study of how private sector engagement can accelerate Nigeria's journey toward a cleaner, greener, and more educated future.

OPINION



Front-of-Package Labels: A Vital Tool for a Healthier Nigeria!

By Bukola Olukemi-Odele

Nigeria is grappling with a rising tide of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), such as diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, and hypertension. These illnesses are often closely tied to unhealthy diets, particularly the excessive consumption of processed and packaged foods high in sugar, sodium (salt), and saturated fats.

The widespread availability, affordability, and aggressive marketing of these ultra-processed products continue to push more people toward obesity, metabolic complications, and other diet-related conditions, contributing to the 29 percent of all deaths in Nigeria now linked to NCDs.

In this context, consumers need clearer and more accessible information at the point of purchase about the nutritional content and health risks of the foods they are buying. Front-of-Pack (FOP) labels provides exactly this by offering quick, visible guidance that helps people identify foods high in sugar, salt, and unhealthy fats. These labels steer consumers away from high-risk products and support healthier choices in the face of an escalating public health crisis.

FOP labels use simple, easy-to-understand graphics, symbols, or text placed prominently on the front of packaged food and drink products. Unlike the detailed, often confusing “nutrition facts” tables found at the back of a product’s pack, FOP labels are designed for quick comprehension and bring the most important health information to where consumers actually look. They improve instant recognition of unhealthy products, even for consumers with low literacy levels or those shopping in a hurry.

Common examples around the world include warning labels such as black octagons stating, “HIGH IN SUGAR”, the Traffic Light System which uses red, amber, and green colours to show whether a product’s overall nutritional profile is poor, moderate, or healthier, and Nutri-Score which grades food from A to E using a colour coded scale.

This simplicity matters even more in places like Nigeria where shoppers are confronted with an overwhelming influx of foreign products, new brands, and aggressively marketed food ingredients competing for attention on already crowded shelves.

Presently, Nigeria relies on back-of-pack labelling, which is complex,

small, and difficult for the average consumer to comprehend and interpret quickly. A clear and simple warning label, such as a bold black octagon that says, “HIGH IN SUGAR,” could make a decisive difference by cutting through marketing tactics and helping consumers immediately identify products that may harm their family’s health. This also strengthens the public’s right to make informed decisions about their food choices.

Beyond shifting consumer behaviour, FOP labels also push food manufacturers to reformulate their products. Companies often reduce sugar, salt, and saturated fat levels to avoid bearing a prominent “HIGH IN...” warning on their packaging, which in turn contributes to a healthier national food supply.

Research consistently shows that consumers from lower socioeconomic and education backgrounds often face the greatest barriers to understanding complex nutrition information. Clear and visually striking front-of-package (FOP) labels can help close this gap and serve as a vital tool for promoting health equity across Nigeria. By presenting crucial health information in an accessible and easy-to-understand format, these labels empower all Nigerians—regardless of their educational levels or background—to make healthier decisions.

The Nigerian government, through agencies like the Federal Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (FMOHSW) and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), must therefore prioritize an evidence-based policy on front-of-pack labelling, as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) to protect its population. It is time to move from complex back-of-pack data to simple, unmistakable warnings that protect consumers. A clear label on the front of every package is a powerful public health tool that can save lives, reduce pressure on our healthcare systems, and build a truly healthier Nigeria for generations to come.

Olukemi-Odele, a food scientist, is the Programme Officer (Cardiovascular Health, Food Policy Program) at Corporate Accountability and Public Participation Africa (CAPPA).





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GLOBAL REPORT



Top Global Health and Nutrition Trends to watch

By Olufemi Somotun

Recently, Innova Market Insights employs a 360-degree approach to examining health and nutrition. Each year, Innova conducts consumer trends research that integrates consumer, category, and product data to provide a holistic view of the market. “Innova’s Top Health & Nutrition Trends for 2026- Global” report examines the macro context and drivers for health and nutrition trends and provides insights into how brands can succeed in the global food and beverage market for the year to come.

Macro Context on Health and Wellbeing

Consumers are increasingly seeking

methods to maintain their health and well-being. However, pressures on health are a key megatrend impacting consumer preferences on a global scale. Healthcare systems are under strain, due to increased demand and costs, and population aging is putting greater emphasis on staying active and healthier for longer. Additionally, the movement toward preventative health is a key driver of nutrition trends, with global consumers seeking more proactive approaches to well-being.

Mental and physical concerns remain high for consumers **in 2025**, with nearly 50% of consumers very concerned about their mental and physical health. Innova’s research on health and nutrition trends indicates that Gen

Z and Millennials are especially foc

used on their mental well-being, with stress, anxiety and worry ranking as top issues. However, consumers currently use diet more for targeting physical than mental well-being.

Trend #1: Natural Wellness

Innova’s top nutrition trend underscores how diet significantly impacts consumer wellbeing, and globally, there is a strong emphasis on natural alternatives. According to Innova’s consumer trend research, 30% of global consumers choose naturalness as their most followed eating practice, followed closely by reductionism. Additionally, when it comes to protein options, consumers perceive plant-based protein as more natural than animal proteins, especially

among younger generations. Therefore, highlighting the benefits of plant-based products can help brands tailor to younger consumers and gain a competitive edge.

Among global consumers, Gen Z and Millennials are viewing naturalness from a holistic approach. Protein and vitamins are paramount to these groups, and over half of these consumers are actively incorporating them into their diets. In addition, Gen Z and Millennials are also limiting additives, such as added sugars, artificial sweeteners, and saturated fats, offering insights into the ingredients to avoid when targeting this segment of consumers.

Trend #2: Weight Shift

Globally, weight remains a leading health concern, with nearly 1 in 2 consumers citing weight management as a key physical health issue. Although being overweight is the top weight challenge for global consumers, the primary end goal for the majority is to achieve



overall fitness and improve health.

GLP-1-based weight loss medication is gaining momentum as a global health trend, particularly in the US. Although exercise and fitness remain the top methods for managing weight and achieving weight loss goals, GLP-1-based weight loss is increasing. According to Innova's consumer research, GLP-1 usage increased from 10% of US consumers in 2024 to 18% in 2025. Additionally, due to reduced caloric intake, nutrient-dense products are in high demand. After GLP-1 use, US consumers are increasing protein, vitamins, and fiber consumption. Therefore, diet remains fundamental to achieving weight goals, and brands can capitalize on this by introducing GLP-1-friendly claims for their products and targeting consumers interested in weight loss.

Trend #3: Positive Aging

Innova's #2 health and nutrition trend highlights how the concept of healthy aging is evolving to become a proactive and holistic approach for consumers across all generations. 73% of global consumers consider health aging as extremely or very important, and ingredient reduction is a vital element of healthy

aging across generations. For all global consumers, sugar and alcohol are top ingredients being avoided, with Boomers prioritizing salt reduction as well.

As consumers age, their priorities shift. Innova's health trends research demonstrates that Gen Z and Millennials have concerns about disease prevention, while Gen X and Boomers look to preserve mobility. Beyond their diets, supplements are also important for older consumers. Multivitamins and minerals lead as the top supplement types consumed by Gen X and Boomers, followed by Vitamin C to boost energy.

Trend #4: Her Health

Targeted nutrition is becoming increasingly important for 'womens health, and there is a heightened focus on hormone balance. Globally, 2 in 3 women are in their natural hormonal cycles or menopausal stages. Women between 18 and 44 years of age are in the center of their natural cycle, which means there is an opportunity for brands to address menstrual concerns of these women during their reproductive years. There is also an opportunity to emphasize the role of hormone balance in supporting brain, bone, and weight health for women in the pre-, peri-, or postmenopausal processes, as 27% of consumers aged 45 and older seek products that help them age well.

Trend #5: Mental Nourishment

Consumers are prioritizing mental and emotional health as key elements of well-being, and they are increasingly

viewing diet as a tool for achieving emotional balance. Globally, 27% of consumers have changed their diet or nutrition to manage their mental health. Innova's health trends research indicates that out of these consumers who made a change, whole foods, low-carb, and plant-based diets are the leading approaches for managing mental health. As a result, low-carb products are being positioned by some brands as tools for emotional balance.

Additionally, stress is nearly universal for global consumers, and almost 1 in 4 consumers use food and drink to cope with it. Carbonated beverages and energy drinks, as well as chocolate and confectionery, rank as the top categories for emotional snacking under stress. Moreover, to manage stress, consumers also view sleep as essential for the mind and body. Thus, brands can promote products, such as melatonin, magnesium, or B-vitamins, that support rest and recovery to target health-conscious



WOMEN BEHIND BRANDS

Dr. Tolulope Oko-Igaire:

Nigeria's Pioneering Force in Mental Health and Workplace Wellbeing

In the bustling heart of Nigeria, where conversations about mental and sexual health are often shrouded in silence, one woman has emerged as a beacon of hope and change. Dr. Tolulope Oko-Igaire, popularly known as 'The Fixer', is not just a foremost sex therapist and mental health practitioner; she is a trailblazer, an advocate, and a fierce champion for awareness and professionalism in a domain long neglected.

"A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step,"** says Tolulope, quoting an African proverb that resonates deeply with her mission. Growing up in an environment where mental health was taboo and professional counselling was virtually non-existent, she faced the daunting challenge of transforming stigma into understanding, ignorance into knowledge.

With a background in social science from the University of Port Harcourt and advanced training from the United Kingdom's International Institute of Counselling, Tolulope's journey has been extraordinary. She recalls the early days when discussing sexual health was considered inappropriate. "We had to navigate cultural barriers and traditional beliefs," she explains. "But I believed that mental health is just as vital as physical health, and I dedicated myself to changing perceptions."

Today, she is the founder of the Chartered Institute of Counselling Nigeria (CICN), formerly known as the Institute of Counselling in Nigeria (ICN). Her influence extends beyond Nigeria, with collaborations across Africa, working diligently with brands,

multinationals, government agencies, and non-governmental organisations to promote workplace wellness practices. Her goal is to embed mental health into organisational cultures, ensuring employees thrive physically, mentally, and emotionally.

Her expertise spans depression, PTSD, human sexuality, and dysfunctional behaviours. She is a recognised specialist in Gestalt, CBT, psychodynamic therapy, and human sexuality — a rare

combination that underscores her versatility and dedication. "Our minds are as complex as our cultures," she notes. "Understanding this complexity is key to healing."

Her work has earned her numerous honours, including being named one of the '50 Under 50 Female Founders' in the Middle East and Africa during a ceremony in Doha, Qatar. "This recognition motivates me to push even harder," she says. "It's a reminder that change is possible,

one mind at a time."

In her own words, Tolulope believes that "mental health is a treasure that Africa must protect and nurture. We must break the silence and embrace openness, for only then can we heal and grow."

Reflecting on her journey, she shares a final thought: "A tree does not make a forest, and one voice alone cannot bring change. But when we come together, we create a chorus that can move mountains."

As she continues her work, Dr. Tolulope Oko-Igaire remains steadfast in her vision — to transform perceptions, save lives, and inspire generations to prioritise mental health. Her story is a testament to the power of resilience, passion, and unwavering conviction in making the world a better place.



Meet Three Female CEOs Driving Innovation and Growth in Nigeria's Healthcare Sector

By Morounmubo Johnson

The HMO industry in Nigeria is experiencing remarkable growth, propelled by innovative leadership and a steadfast commitment to enhancing healthcare access. This story showcases three influential female CEOs who are shaping the future of healthcare management organisations through strategic vision, operational excellence, and a genuine passion for community well-being. Their leadership not only empowers their respective organisations but also sets a powerful benchmark for women in executive roles across Africa's health sector.

**Adesimbo Ukiri,
MD/CEO, Avon Healthcare
Limited**

Adesimbo is a seasoned business executive with a proven track



record of successfully leading marketing, sales, distribution, and business development functions in challenging entrepreneurial environments. She also brings valuable hands-on experience in finance, legal, and corporate communications.

Her expertise includes brand marketing, corporate communications, sales and distribution strategy, business development, and government relations.

As MD/CEO of Avon Healthcare

Limited, Adesimbo oversees all aspects of the company's operations. Under her guidance, Avon HMO has grown into one of Nigeria's leading healthcare maintenance organisations. She is also a Non-Executive Director at Transcorp Hotels Plc. A trained lawyer, Adesimbo holds an LLB from Obafemi Awolowo University and is a Sloan Fellow of London Business School, where she earned an MSc in Management. With over 20 years of professional experience, she has worked across sectors including financial services, FMCG, oil and gas, telecommunications, and healthcare.

**Dr Dorothy Jeff-Nnamani
MD/CEO, Novo Health Africa
Ltd**

Born into royalty as Ada to the late HRH Igwe na Ezuruoha of Obinagu Uwani Akpugo, Enugu State, Dr Dorothy Jeff-Nnamani exemplifies benevolence, humility, and integrity. Her upbringing in a royal palace nurtured her pride in her heritage and a deep sense of community service, inspired by her father's philanthropic efforts.

A medical doctor and public health specialist, she holds an MPH from the University of Lagos and an MSc in Infectious Diseases from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. As founder and CEO of Novo Health Africa, she is revolutionising healthcare access across Africa through innovative technology and health financing.



WOMEN BEHIND BRANDS

Committed to achieving SDG3, she advocates for universal health coverage, driven by her passion to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities. Jeff-Nnamani is a dedicated leader, guided by purpose and a vision for healthier communities.

**Dr Adetutu Afolabi
MD/CEO, Wellness HMO**

Adetutu possesses a burning desire to inspire people to make deliberate lifestyle choices that will enhance not only their personal well-being but also that of those around them. A pharmacist and seasoned serial entrepreneur, she thrives on expanding horizons and pushing



boundaries to create new avenues for maximum productivity.

Her journey began with the establishment of Wellness, a community pharmacy practice launched in 2007, driven by her keen interest in making healthcare affordable and accessible. Wellness has since evolved into more than a health insurance provider; it is now a platform for wellness advocacy and education.

A strong advocate for value creation for all stakeholders and exceptional service delivery, Adetutu enjoys building sustainable processes that enhance organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

She holds a Bachelor of Pharmacy from Olabisi Onabanjo University, an MBA from Lagos Business School, Pan-Atlantic University, and a Doctorate in Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services from Hult International Business School.

LIFESTYLE

From Street to Global Stage: Celebrating Nigeria's Diverse Flavours at the GTCO Food & Drink Festival – Holiday Edition

By Prosper Mene

In the heart of Lagos, the inaugural Holiday Edition of the **GTCO Food & Drink Festival – Holiday Edition** recently transformed the city into a vibrant celebration of **Nigerian cultural identity**. More than just a culinary gathering, the event served as a sophisticated platform for indigenous flavours, proving that Nigeria's diverse street cuisine and traditional recipes are ready for the global stage.

The Engine of Creativity and Enterprise Nigeria's Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) are the undisputed engine of the national economy, contributing approximately **48 to 50% of the GDP**. Despite their vital role, these businesses often struggle with limited access to finance and reliable market entry. The festival addressed these hurdles through a revolutionary **zero-cost vendor participation model**. By removing financial barriers such as stall fees, the event functioned as a **massive, free economic incubator**, allowing **213 Nigerian-owned food and beverage SMEs** to showcase their craft—nearly double the participation of previous editions.

Segun Agbaje, Group Chief Executive Officer of GTCO Plc, emphasised that the festival aligns with a mission to **"fuel enterprise, promote African creativity, and connect communities through meaningful lifestyle experiences"**. He noted that the platform specifically supports those entrepreneurs who **"form the backbone of our economy"**.

Elevating Indigenous Flavours

The festival provided a unique space where **indigenous foods and street cuisine** were elevated to international standards. This environment allowed vendors to



preserve **traditional recipes** while introducing **modern culinary interpretations** to a wide audience. From gourmet burgers to traditional street snacks, the diversity of Nigerian cuisines represented the rich tapestry of the nation's heritage.

Human-Interest Stories: Growth and Visibility

The success of this model is best reflected in the testimonials of the vendors. For **Adadu**, the founder of **Jyp Sie**, the festival was a breakthrough for brand exposure: **"It has been an amazing platform for us. It's a big visibility for us and we thank GTCO"**.

The commercial viability was equally impressive. **Mark Slade**, Co-founder of **Jared Beach Resort**

Kitchen, returned as a repeat participant, stating it is **"rewarding to meet new customers and meet existing ones as well"**. Similarly, a representative from **Topsis Burger**

Lab described their experience as **"perfect" and "very busy,"** praising the organisers for providing such a **"brilliant platform"**.

Beyond sales, the festival served as a hub for **industry collaboration**. **Oge**, the founder of **The Create Company**, highlighted the networking value, describing it as an opportunity **"to just like show and also networking other people you know that are already in the same industry"** and a vital **"opportunity to meet with potential investors"**.

A Community Landmark For consumers, the festival was a festive anchor that made diverse culinary options accessible. Shopper **Olabisi** noted she **"had a wonderful experience shopping and they all affordable"**. For others like **Eze**, the event was about connection: **"I had some much with my friends and it was an opportunity for us hang out after a long time"**.

By blending a Christmas Village and children's play zones with high-end food stalls, GTCO has created a marketplace that celebrates Nigerian cuisine not just as food, but as a central pillar of national



Speed Meets Spectacle:

TOR'Q 2025 – Africa's Revolutionary Motorsport Performance Captivates Fans

Motorsport is a realm of speed, precision, and human endeavour that has captivated fans for over a century. December 7 will remain an unforgettable date for many, as TOR'Q 2025 - Africa's inaugural theatrical motorsport performance - took centre stage. This unique event fused the adrenaline of high-octane driving with the spectacle of love theatre—a revolutionary experience that has transformed how motorsport is perceived, experienced, and celebrated across the continent. Sponsored by Fearless Energy Drink, it invigorated fans with refreshment and excitement.

From exhilarating drifts in Ibadan, where it started in 2019 where it started in 2019 to the grand stage of Lagos, TOR'Q has continually pushed the boundaries of motorsport, redefining entertainment and innovation in Africa.





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